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TOHAK 04

MEMORANDUM FOR:
FROM:
SUBJECT:

SEPTEMBER 29, 1975
THE PRESIDENT
HENRY A. KISSINGER
INFORMATION ITEMS

CIA SUMMARY: VIETNAM AFTER THE FALL: NEARLY FIVE MONTHS AFTER THE FALL OF SAIGON, SOUTH VIETNAM REMAINS UNDER A FORM OF MARTIAL LAW IN WHICH NORTH VIETNAMESE MILITARY PERSONALITIES MAKE ALL DAY-TO-DAY POLITICAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND ECONOMIC DIRECTIVES. THE PRIMARY AUTHORITY, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO BE PHAM HUNG, FOURTH-RANKING MEMBER OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE POLITBUREAU, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF PARTY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS IN THE SOUTH. THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT, WHICH OSTENSIBLY SERVES AS A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, HAS NO MEANINGFUL AUTHORITY OVER EITHER PHAM HUNG OR THE MILITARY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE TAKE-OVER, THE COMMUNISTS MOVED TO OFFSET THE LACK OF CAPABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY ADMINISTRATORS BY IMPORTING LARGE NUMBERS OF OFFICIALS FROM THE NORTH. MANY OF THESE APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN FORMER SOUTHERNERS WHO HAD COME NORTH AT THE TIME OF THE 1954 GENEVA ACCORDS.

COMMUNIST POLICIES TO DATE HAVE BEEN AIMED PRIMARILY AT RESTORING ORDER AND THE ECONOMY. THE COMMUNISTS EARLY ADOPTED A RELATIVELY CONCILIATORY APPROACH IN ORDER TO MOBILIZE SUPPORT, BUT GIVEN THE LONG AND BITTER NATURE OF THE CONFLICT AND THE ABUNDANCE OF FIREARMS IN THE COUNTRY, THEY ARE NOW ADMITTING TO OPPOSITION FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES, INCLUDING FORMER GOVERNMENT SOLDIERS, RELIGIOUS SECTS, AND ETHNIC MINORITIES IN THE HIGHLANDS. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF 16 OF THE 20 NORTH VIETNAMESE DIVISIONS IN THE SOUTH ATTESTS TO THE FACT THAT SECURITY REMAINS A PROBLEM. THE ECONOMY IS PROBABLY

***** WHSR COMMENT *****

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ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

FAR MORE WORRISOME, THE COMMUNISTS ADMIT THAT IT IS STILL IN BAD SHAPE. LOW PRODUCTION AND HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT HAVE REDUCED THE LEVEL OF LIVING THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. CONSIDERABLE HELP FROM HANOI'S FOREIGN ALLIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO GET THE ECONOMY ON ITS FEET. SO FAR THE COMMUNISTS HAVE NOT ATTEMPTED TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL OR SWEEPING CHANGES IN THE SOUTH'S ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND THEY ARE DEPENDING HEAVILY ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISES TO REVIVE THE ECONOMY.

VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS, BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH, PROCLAIM FORMAL REUNIFICATION AS THEIR FOREMOST OBJECTIVE. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE PROCESS WILL BE GRADUAL, FOLLOWING PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AN ACCEPTABLE COMMUNIST ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND IN RESTORING ORDER AND ECONOMIC STABILITY. ALTHOUGH THE COMMUNISTS ARE MAINTAINING THE FICTION OF AN INDEPENDENT SOUTH VIETNAMESE STATE, THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT VIETNAM IS NOW ONE COUNTRY WITH ONE POLICY.

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